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COWBOY STAR OF THE MOVIES

TIM HOLT

a 12/30

No. 13

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TIM HOLT'S WESTERN ALBUM

SHARP arguments—in the shape of well-thrown hunting knives—are presented by Tim and Chito to convince a badman that he ought to tell them who is the mastermind behind a rustling outfit!

GUN-SHY! This tough hombre is literally shy a gun, as Chito hands over their captive's weapon to the sheriff. Tim, taking no chances, stays alert!



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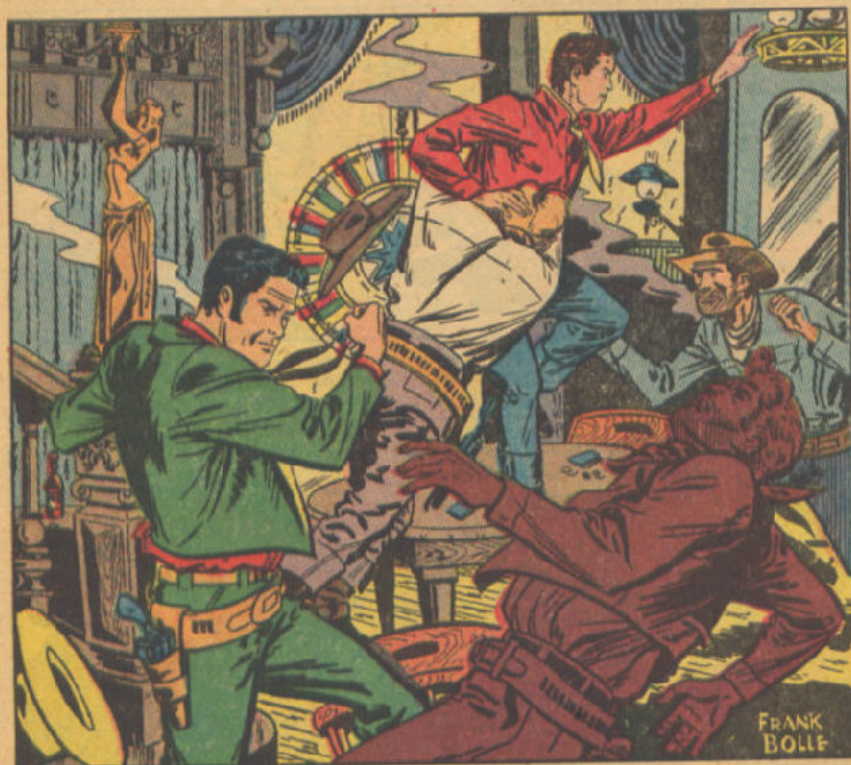
TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT

SOMETIMES, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE HONEST COW TOWNS OF THE WEST, OTHER TOWNS SPRANG INTO BEING. HERE THE HOTELS AND SALOONS CATERED TO OUTLAWS AND LONGRIDERS, TO CATTLE RUSTLERS AND GUN-HANDY KILLERS. IN A TOWN LIKE THIS, THERE WERE NO QUESTIONS ASKED. THERE WAS NO MAN WHO WORE THE LAW BADGE. IT WAS A BADMAN'S TOWN—SUCH A TOWN AS BORDER, WHERE ALL WHO WERE ON THE DODGE COULD SEEK, AND FIND, COMPLETE SAFETY...

AND INTO BORDER, RIDE TIM HOLT AND HIS PRAIRIE PARTNER, CHITO. THEY HUNT A MURDERER, AND MEET A DEADLY HAIL OF—

BORDER TOWN BULLETS!



A FLIMSY TABLE CRACKS AS TIM LURCHES INTO SPACE WITH TWO BADMEN CLINGING TO HIS LEGS! BEHIND HIM, CHITO FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE!

RECKON WE GAVE OURSELVES AWAY—BY NOT HAVING A REWARD DODGER—WITH OUR NAMES ON IT!

I GOT HIM!

—ME TOO!



BUT NOW THAT WE'RE IN THIS—WE'RE IN IT ALL THE WAY! LET GO, YOU SIDE-WINDERS!

YEEOW!

OOOPFF!

TIM HOLT

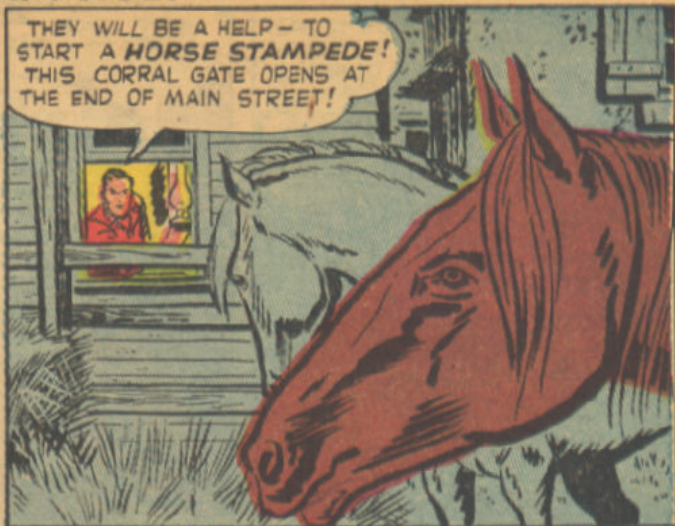


TIM HOLT



WAIT! MAYBE THERE IS SOMETHING WE CAN DO! THOSE LAMPS...!

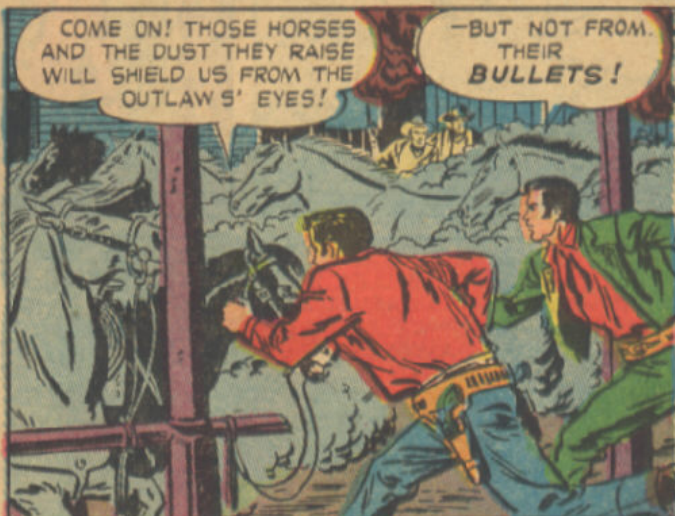
I AM FOR SEEING THEM—BUT THEY ARE NOT FOR BEING MOCH HELPS!



THEY WILL BE A HELP—TO START A HORSE STAMPEDE! THIS CORRAL GATE OPENS AT THE END OF MAIN STREET!



AS THE BLAZING LAMPS SAIL THROUGH THE NIGHT, SHRILL WHINNIES FILL THE AIR. THE LAMPS FALL IN PILES OF HAY, AND CATCH FIRE!



COME ON! THOSE HORSES AND THE DUST THEY RAISE WILL SHIELD US FROM THE OUTLAWS' EYES!

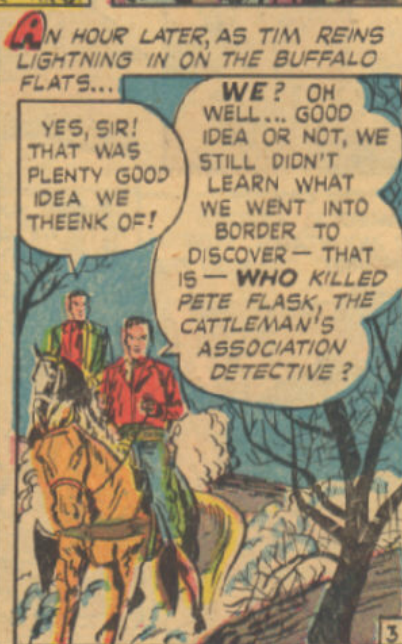
—BUT NOT FROM THEIR BULLETS!



BENT LOW, TIM AND CHITO THUNDER DOWN THE SINGLE MAIN STREET OF BORDER TOWN...

THERE'S TOO MUCH DUST TO SEE US!

HA! EES FOR BEING A GOOD IDEA, HAH?



AN HOUR LATER, AS TIM REINS LIGHTNING IN ON THE BUFFALO FLATS...

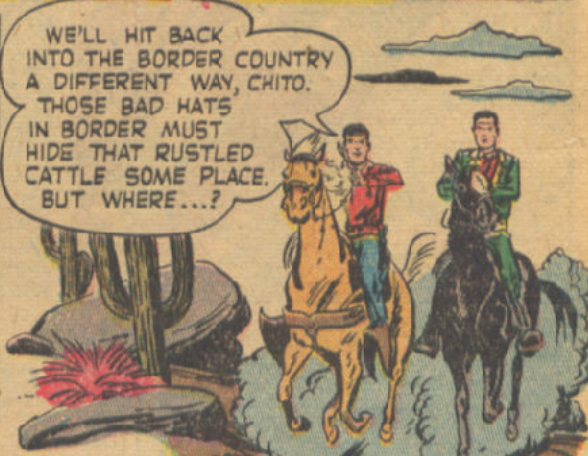
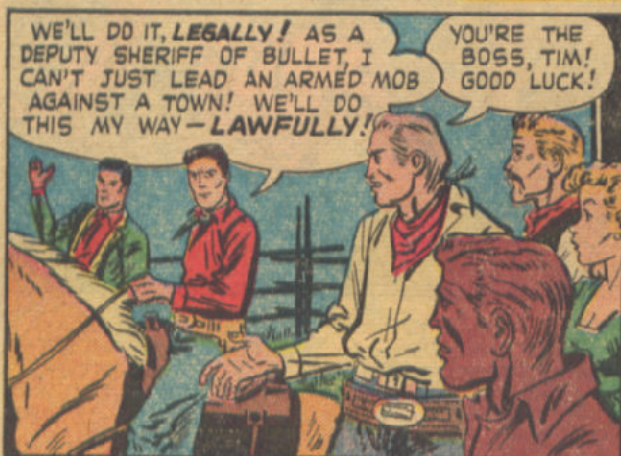
YES, SIR! THAT WAS PLENTY GOOD IDEA WE THEENK OF!

WE? OH WELL... GOOD IDEA OR NOT, WE STILL DIDN'T LEARN WHAT WE WENT INTO BORDER TO DISCOVER—THAT IS—WHO KILLED PETE FLASK, THE CATTLEMAN'S ASSOCIATION DETECTIVE?

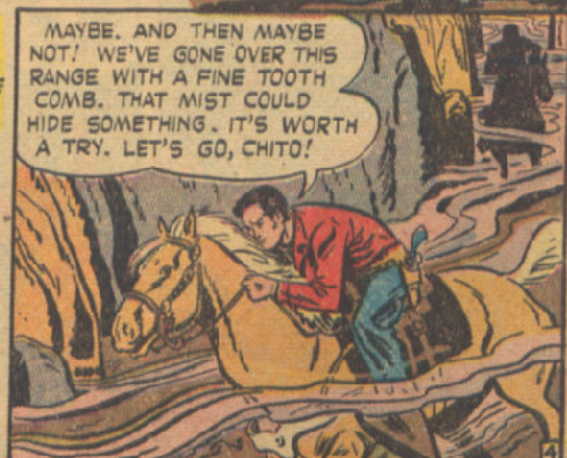


WHEN WE CUT IN ON THIS PLAY BY VOLUNTEERING TO HELP THE RANCHMEN AROUND BUFFALO FLATS, I HAD A HUNCH WE'D BE HELPING OURSELVES! THAT BORDER TOWN IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EXPAND RIGHT SOON—AND START RUSTLING T BAR H STEERS!

TIM HOLT



PAST THE DRAWS AND BREAKS OF THE CANYON COUNTRY, UP HIGHER INTO THE RIMROCK, ACROSS THE SLOPES OF PINON-SHEATHED MOUNTAINS, RIDE TIM AND CHITO. THEN, SOME HOURS PAST DAWN, ON THE MORNING OF THE FIFTH DAY...



TIM HOLT



TIM IS ABOUT TO SWING UP
INTO THE SADDLE AGAIN WHEN
HIS ALERT EYES WIDEN IN
SURPRISE...



WITH A PUSH, TIM TAKES OFF IN THE
CABLE CAR. SWIFTLY IT PICKS UP SPEED,
TEARING THROUGH THE DAMP MISTS...

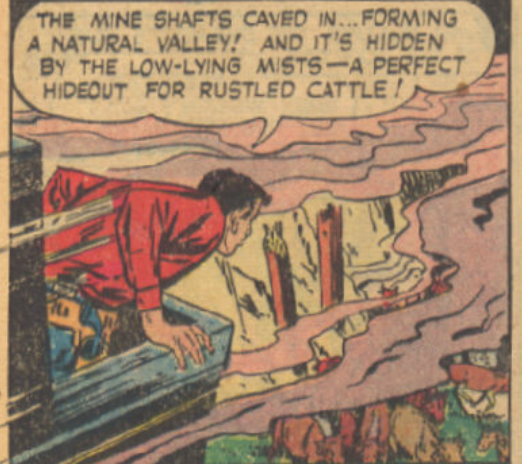
BETTER BE PREPARED
FOR TROUBLE IN CASE
IT COMES!



HURTLING ALONG AT TERRIFIC SPEED, THE CAR BLASTS
THROUGH THE MISTS, AND THEN - SPREAD OUT BELOW
TIM, IS A VALLEY FILLED WITH STEERS!



THE MINE SHAFTS CAVED IN...FORMING
A NATURAL VALLEY! AND IT'S HIDDEN
BY THE LOW-LYING MISTS - A PERFECT
HIDEOUT FOR RUSTLED CATTLE!



HEY!
LOOK!

THE CABLE
CAR! BUT WHO'S
THAT IN IT?

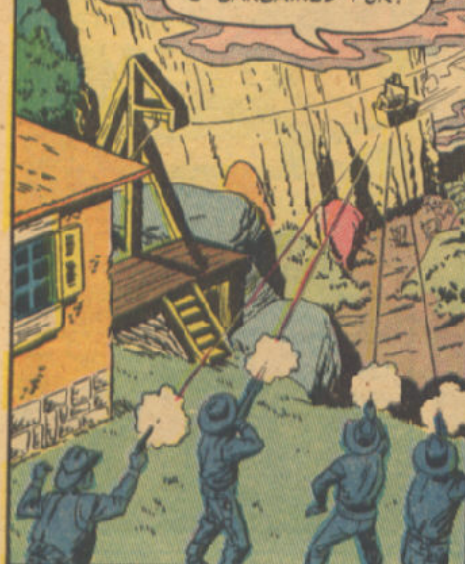
NEVER MIND
WHO! - IT AIN'T
ONE OF OUR
BOYS!
GIT HIM!



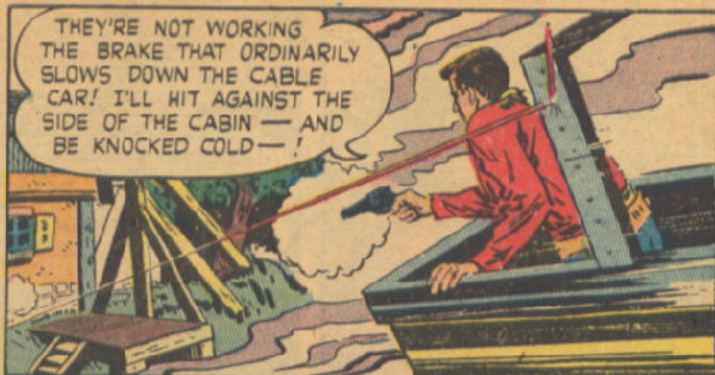
TIM HOLT

WINCHESTERS AND COLTS SOUND WITH SHARP FURY AS TIM HURTLES DOWN INTO THE SECRET VALLEY...

AS CHITO WOULD SAY—AY DIMI! LOOKS AS THOUGH I RAN INTO MORE THAN I BARGAINED FOR!

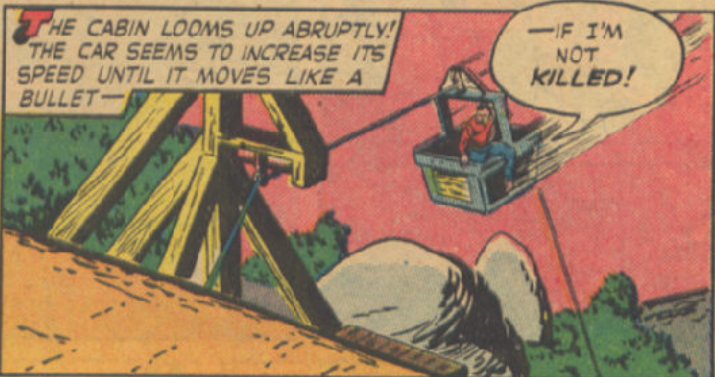


THEY'RE NOT WORKING THE BRAKE THAT ORDINARILY SLOWS DOWN THE CABLE CAR! I'LL HIT AGAINST THE SIDE OF THE CABIN—AND BE KNOCKED COLD—!



THE CABIN LOOMS UP ABRUPTLY! THE CAR SEEMS TO INCREASE ITS SPEED UNTIL IT MOVES LIKE A BULLET—

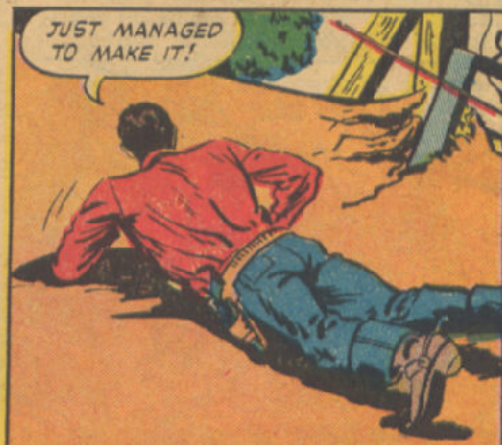
—IF I'M NOT KILLED!



WITH A DESPERATE BUNCHING OF MUSCLES, TIM DIVES FROM THE CAR—AS IT CRASHES INTO THE CABIN WALL!



JUST MANAGED TO MAKE IT!



HE'S OUT LIKE AN EMPTY LAMP!

NOW'S OUR CHANCE!

DON'T KILL HIM RIGHT AWAY—WE WANT TO FIND OUT WHO HE IS!



GUNS BLAZING, THE OWLHOOTS RUSH TO THE ROOFTOP...

GRAB HOLD OF THIS LADDER!

KEEP THEM GUNS WORKIN'! DON'T LET HIM GET TO THE EDGE TO PUSH THIS LADDER OFF!



TIM HOLT

SHAKEN DAZED AND SICK FROM THE FORCE OF HIS LEAP AND FALL, TIM'S HANDS SHAKE AS THEY GRASP THE WALNUT HANDLES OF HIS COLTS...

GOT TO — CLEAR MY HEAD — IF I'M GOING TO STOP THEIR RUSH...



BUT THEN — WHY STOP IT? LET 'EM COME!



—BECAUSE WHEN THEY GET THERE, I'LL BE GONE!



THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO FOLLOW ME WITHOUT THEIR SADDLERS! DIG DUST, YOU HORSES! GIT ALONG THERE!



ONE MAN — COMES IN LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNIN' — AND GOES OFF WITH EVERY BRONC WE GOT!

WE'RE AFOOT — WITH BORDER TWENTY MILES AWAY!



MOMENTS LATER, AT THE TOP OF THE MIST-HIDDEN VALLEY...

IT'S TIM, CHITO! DON'T SHOOT!

HAH! WHERE FOR ARE YOU FINDING THOSE HORSES, TIM?

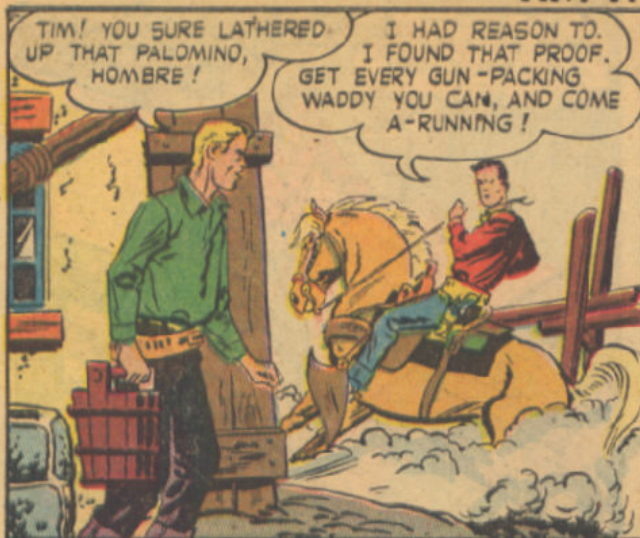


DOWN BELOW, IN THE VALLEY THAT THE MIST HIDES! THERE'S RUSTLED CATTLE THERE, CHITO, SO I'M RIDING FOR THE RANCHMEN. YOU GUARD THIS TRAIL. DON'T LET A SINGLE OWLHOOT ESCAPE!

I WEE! KEEP THEM PENNED EEN LIKE PEEGS!



TIM HOLT



BUT CHITO IS ENJOYING HIMSELF IMMENSELY. ONLY ONE BAD HAT CAN COME AT HIM AT A TIME, AND HIS RIFLE IS NEVER SILENT...

HA! NOW YOU ARE FOR TO TRY EET ALL TOGETHERS, NO?

THAT EES NUMBAIRE THREE! HA! EES GOOD SHOOTING, CHITO JOSE GONZALES BUSTAMONTE RAFFERTY! VAIRY GOOD SHOOTING!



SOME HOURS LATER, AS THE SUN DIPS TOWARD THE HORIZON...

YOU HEARD WHAT THE MEN SAID. THESE ARE THE STEERS YOU LOST. THEY WERE HIDING THEM UNTIL THEY COULD MAKE ONE BIG DRIVE TO A NORTHERN MARKET.

RECKON THAT'S THE PROOF YOU WANT, TIM!



TIM HOLT



GOLTS BELCH FIRE AND LEAD IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS! FEET DRUM ON THE HARDPACKED DIRT ROAD...

ACCORDING TO THE MEN IN MIST VALLEY, THE RING-LEADERS ALWAYS STAY IN THE HOTEL...



LESS THAN AN HOUR AFTER THE FIRST GUNSHOT, THE BORDER CROWD IS ROPED TO ITS HORSES, AND MOVING TOWARD BULLET AND TRAIL...



WE'LL BURN BORDER DOWN TO THE GROUND, AND LET THE PACK RATS AND PRAIRIE DOGS TAKE OVER...



TIM HOLT

the GHOST RIDER

DICK AYERS

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE RAILROADS, BATTLES RAGED OVER THE MOUNTAIN PASSES—THOSE SHORTCUTS TO THE GOLD FIELDS AND THE SILVER AND COPPER MINING TOWNS. THE RAILROAD THAT OWNED THE QUICKEST TRACKS COULD MAKE THE MOST MONEY — AND THE HARD, GUN-QUICK ELEMENT SOON LEARNED THAT THERE WAS MONEY IN IT FOR THEM, TOO.



BUT WHEN A HARD-RIDING BUNCH DROVE DOWN ON THE NATIONAL PACIFIC, THE SPECTRAL FORM OF THE GHOST RIDER CATAPULTED IN FRONT OF THE DIAMOND-STACK ENGINES, AS HE CONFRONTED—

THE TERROR OF THE TRACKS!



A MAN SWEARS IN THE NIGHT WITH COLD FEAR THROBBING IN HIS THROAT—

YOU GOT THE WRONG MAN, BOYS! I NEVER DID NOTHIN' TO NOBODY...

YUH WORK FOR THE NATIONAL PACIFIC, DON'T YUH?



JEB! CAL! IKE! THEY GOT YOU ALL!

WE GOT BUCKETS OF TAR, AN' BAGS O' FEATHERS. WE AIM TO MAKE WORKIN' FOR THE NATIONAL PACIFIC RIGHT UNPOPULAR!



TIM HOLT

BRING 'EM UP HERE ONE BY ONE. THIS TAR IS GOIN' TO BE JUST LIKE A WET, HOT BLANKET WHEN I DAB IT ON!



THE SHRILL WHINNY OF A LUNGING STALLION, THE SCREAM OF A FRIGHTENED MAN - AND OUT OF THE NIGHT - THE GHOST RIDER!



AAAAAGGGH!

FOREGO YOUR VICIOUS PLEASURES! LOOSE THE BUCKET!



YEEHOOOW!

WHEN THE GHOST RIDER COMMANDS - OBEY!



GNNNGGG!

BECAUSE YOU WORK FOR THE NATIONAL PACIFIC RAILROAD - YOU WERE TO BE TARRED AND FEATHERED?

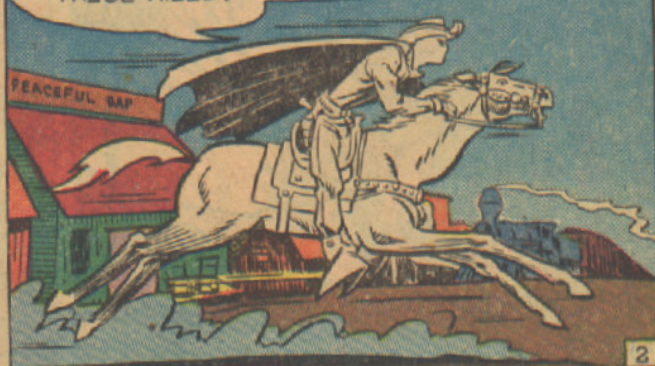


THAT'S RIGHT. THERE'S ANOTHER RAILROAD OPERATING NEAR HERE - THE WESTERN STATES. THEY'RE TRYING TO FORCE US TO BUY THEIR TRACKS AND EQUIPMENT!

THE WESTERN STATES HAS BEEN OUT OF BUSINESS FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS. A MAN NAMED TOBE PARKER BOUGHT UP THEIR ROLLING STOCK FOR A MEASLY FIVE HUNDRED SIMOLEONS - AND WANTS TO COLLECT A MILLION FOR IT FROM THE NATIONAL PACIFIC!



BY HIRING THUGS AND GUNMEN, TOBE PARKER CAN MAKE THE PROGRESS OF THE NATIONAL PACIFIC COME TO A DEAD STOP! UNLESS IT PAYS BLOOD MONEY FOR USELESS EQUIPMENT, HE WILL KEEP FOOD AND MEDICINE AND A BETTER WAY OF LIFE FROM REACHING THESE HILLS!

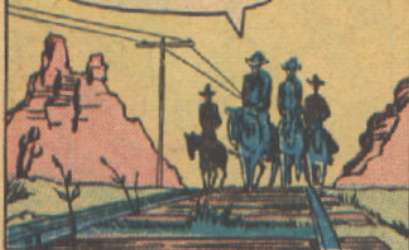


TIM HOLT

SOME DAYS LATER, ALONG THE RUSTED TRACKS OF THE WESTERN STATES LINE...

THE GHOST RIDER SURE BUSTED UP OUR LITTLE PARTY. I TOLD YOU THIS WAS A FOOL IDEA, TOBE!

NO, THIS IS A GOOD IDEA. THE NATIONAL PACIFIC WANTS THE GOLD FIELD'S BUSINESS. IF WE TAKE SADDLE PASS, THEY'LL NEVER GET IT!



AN' WE'LL TAKE AN' HOLD SADDLE PASS - WITH GUNS! IT'LL COST THE NATIONAL PACIFIC PLENTY TO BUY IT FROM US! PLENTY!

HUH! MEBBE YUH'RE NOT AS LOCO AS I THOUGHT, TOBE! SADDLE PASS WOULD SAVE THEM HUNDREDS OF MILES OF TRACK-LAYIN'. YEAH! LET'S RIDE!



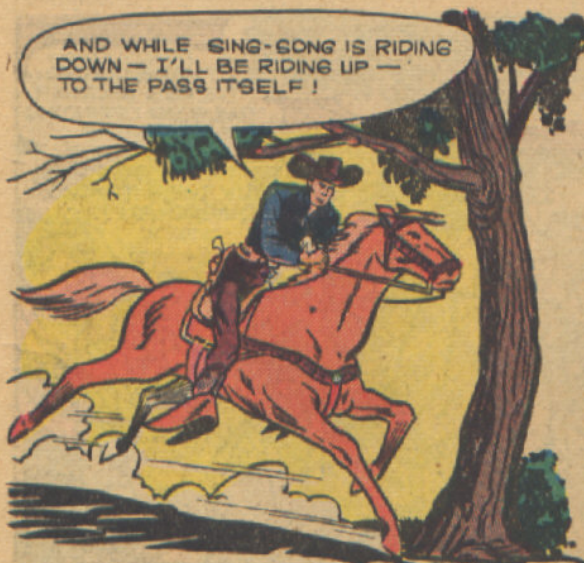
HIGH IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE BROKEN BOW MOUNTAIN RANGE...

IT'S PARKER AND HIS MEN, SING-SONG. THEY'RE HEADING FOR SADDLE PASS - AND FOR TROUBLE FOR THE NATIONAL PACIFIC!

SING-SONG RIDE PLENNY QUICK-FAST. TELLEE RAILROAD MEN WHAT HAPPENED!



AND WHILE SING-SONG IS RIDING DOWN - I'LL BE RIDING UP - TO THE PASS ITSELF!



HERE AND THERE IN THE WESTERN LANDS, MEN LIKE TOBE PARKER FIND A READY WELCOME IN THE CAMPS OF RENEGADE APACHES...

GOOD PAY FOR YOUR BRAVES, MISKETEE! LEND ME TWENTY OF THEM. I PAY YOU WITH TWENTY HORSES.

MISKETEE LOAN BRAVES. TAKE YOUR HORSES AS PAYMENT! GOOD!



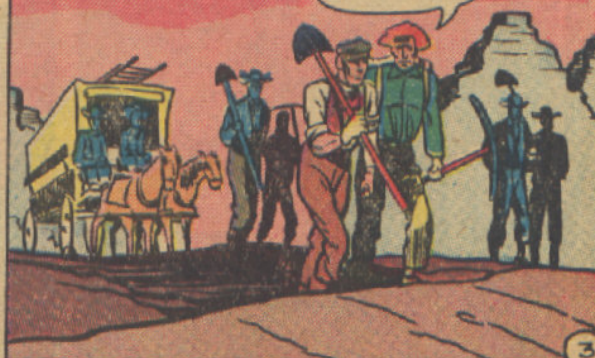
A PERFECT SETUP! WHEN THOSE NATIONAL PACIFIC CREWS HEAD UP THIS WAY - THEY'LL NEVER GO DOWN AGAIN!



AT DUSK -

WE'LL JUST MAKE A PRELIMINARY SURVEY, AND BREAK THE GROUND.

I WISH THEY'D SENT SOME GUARDS ALONG. I GOT A FUNNY FEELING WE'RE WALKING INTO SOME SORT OF TRAP....



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



THERE! SEE PARKER!

AN' HE'S FIRIN' AT THE GHOST RIDER! FORWARD, BOYS! WE'LL TEACH THESE HOMBRES A LESSON THEY'LL NOT SOON FORGET!



THE POUNDING OF HOOVES DRUMS A WARNING THROUGH TOBE PARKER'S BRAIN! WITH A RECKLESS CRY HE DIVES SIDWAYS TOWARD HIS REARING HORSE...

YOU WIN FOR NOW, GHOST RIDER — YOU WIN!

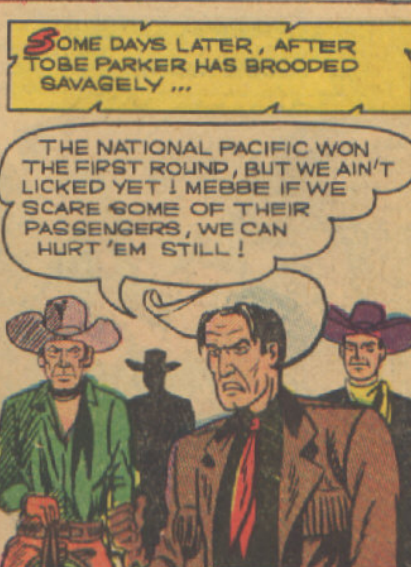


BUT THERE'S GOIN' TO BE ANOTHER RECKONIN'! TOBE PARKER DON'T QUIT! I'LL BE BACK—!



THEY WILL TRY SOMETHING ELSE NOW. BUT SADDLE PASS IS SAFE, IF YOU LAY THE RAILS ACROSS IT...

WE'LL START RIGHT AWAY!

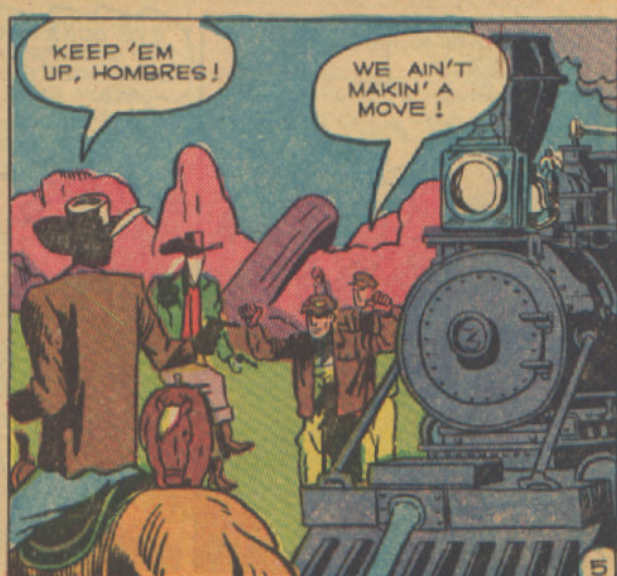


SOME DAYS LATER, AFTER TOBE PARKER HAS BROODED SAVAGELY...

THE NATIONAL PACIFIC WON THE FIRST ROUND, BUT WE AIN'T LICKED YET! MEBBE IF WE SCARE SOME OF THEIR PASSENGERS, WE CAN HURT 'EM STILL!



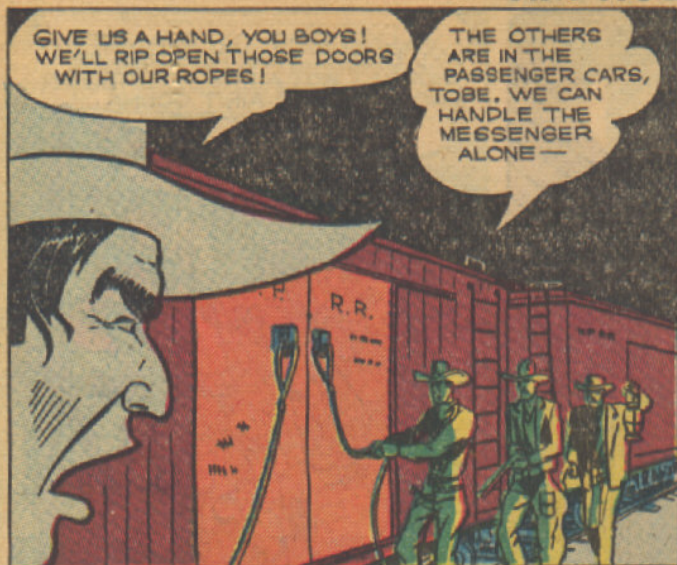
WE'LL LIFT THE BULLION BOX IN THE BAGGAGE CAR, THEN RELIEVE THE PASSENGERS OF THEIR VALUABLES. RECKON IF FOLKS GIT TH' IDEA THAT ROAD AGENTS PICK ON THE NATIONAL PACIFIC — THEY WON'T USE IT!



KEEP 'EM UP, HOMBRES!

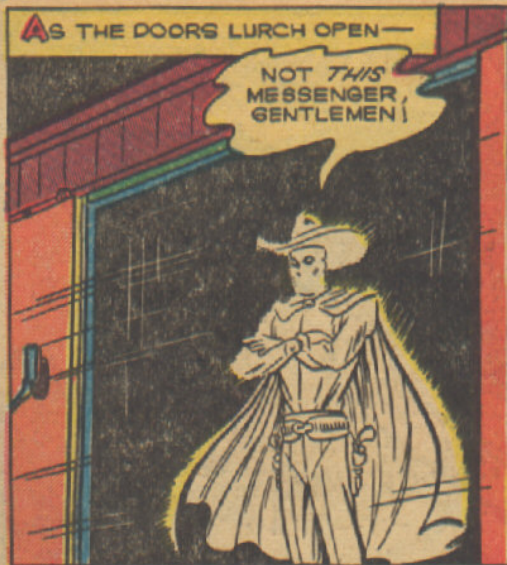
WE AIN'T MAKIN' A MOVE!

TIM HOLT



GIVE US A HAND, YOU BOYS!
WE'LL RIP OPEN THOSE DOORS
WITH OUR ROPES!

THE OTHERS
ARE IN THE
PASSENGER CARS,
TOBE, WE CAN
HANDLE THE
MESSENGER
ALONE—



AS THE DOORS LURCH OPEN—

NOT *THIS*
MESSENGER,
GENTLEMEN!



FOR I EXPECTED SOME
SUCH AN ATTEMPT AS
THIS! I WATCHED YOU
PUT LOGS ACROSS
THE TRACKS—



—THEN I SWUNG ABOARD AS
IT CROSSED DUST CANYON!

YOPE!

UGHHH!



CALL YOUR MEN AWAY FROM
THE PASSENGERS, PARKER!
IF YOU DO NOT—YOU SHALL
NEVER LEAVE HERE ALIVE!

GNNNGGGG!



GRAZED WITH FEAR, TOBE PARKER
LEAPS FOR HIS SADDLER...

REMEMBER MY WORDS,
PARKER! CALL YOUR
MEN OFF!

I WILL!
I WILL!
I WILL!



THAT FIEND OF THE NIGHT!
HE AIN'T HUMAN! HE'S WHEREVER
YUH DON'T EXPECT HIM! BUT I AIN'T
THROUGH YET! I'LL FIND A WAY
TO GET BACK AT THE
NATIONAL PACIFIC!

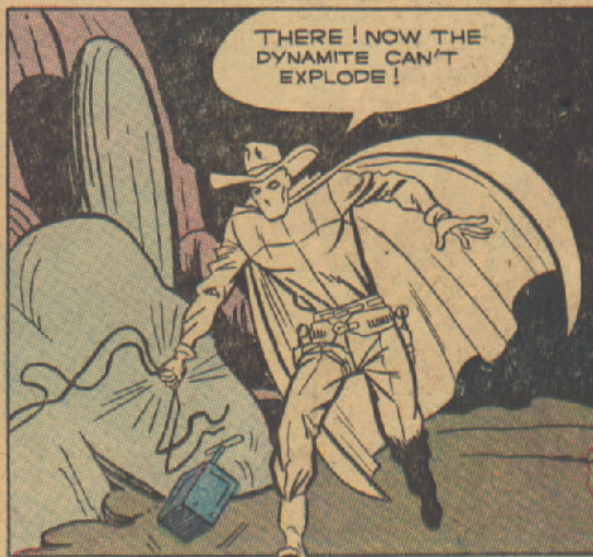
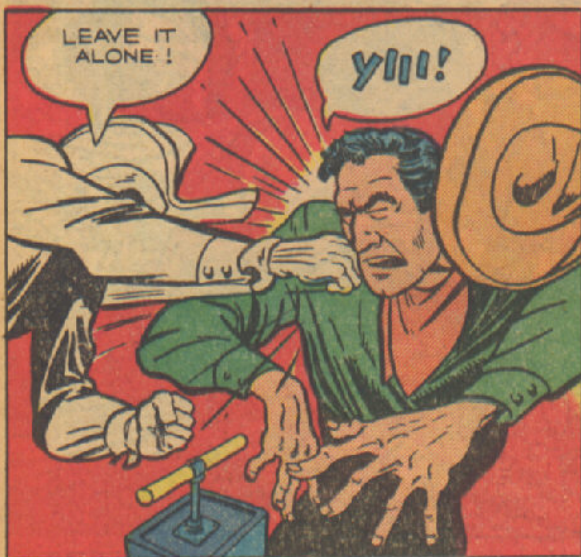
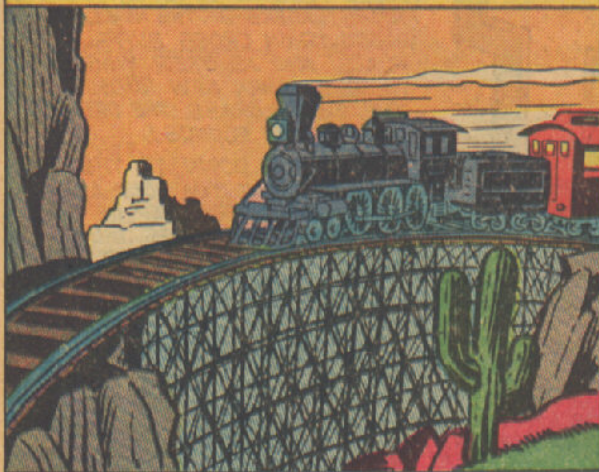


FOR SOME DAYS, REX FURY AND SING SONG PATROL THE TIMBER BELT HIGH ABOVE THE GLEAMING RAILS OF THE NATIONAL PACIFIC. THEN, ONE AFTERNOON ...



TIM HOLT

UNAWARE THAT DEATH WAITS BENEATH THE GLISTENING TRACKS, THE NATIONAL PACIFIC LIMITED THUNDERS FORWARD...

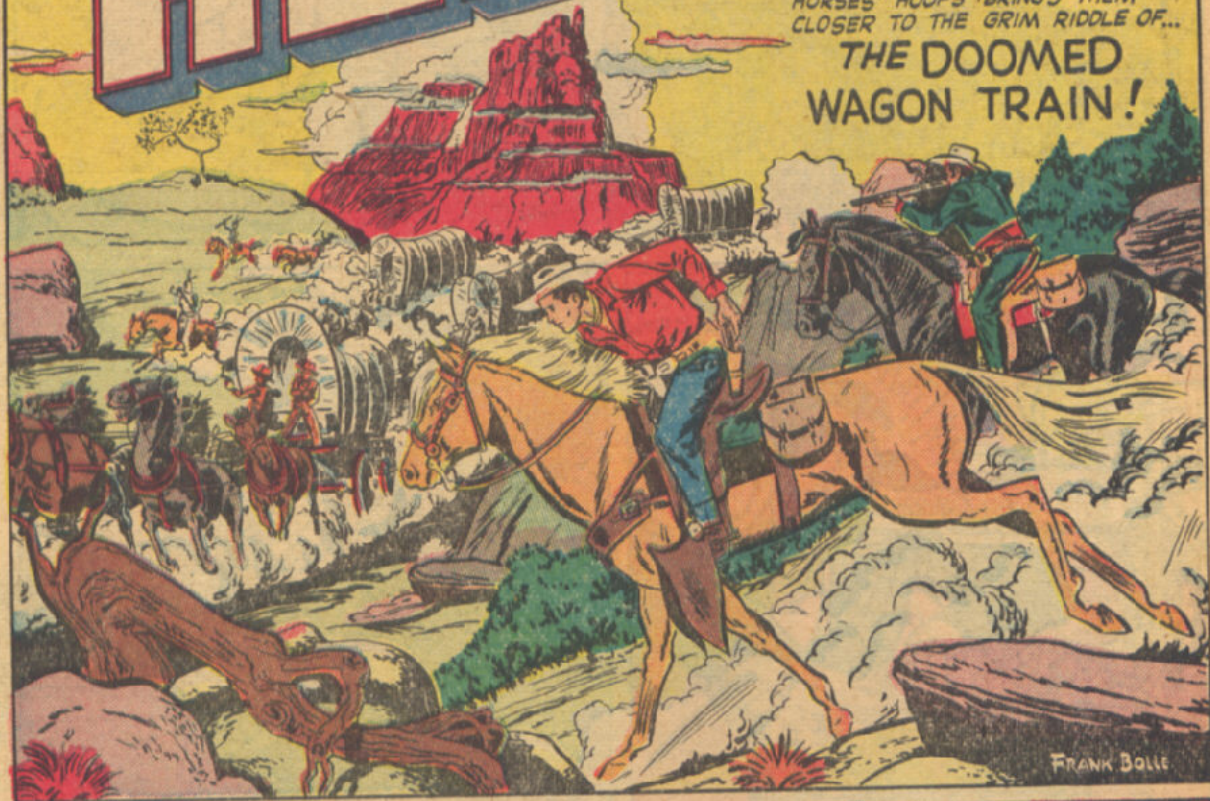


TIM HOLT

TRUNDLING ACROSS THE PRAIRIES, THEIR WAGON BEDS FILLED WITH THINGS TO MAKE A HOME, THE HOMESTEADERS OF THE NEWLETT WAGON TRAIN CROSS BUFFALO FLATS. AND, AS THEIR WAGON-WHEELS MARK NEW RUTS IN THE GRAMA GRASS, THE DREADED WAR-WHOOP SOUNDS!

THUNDERING DOWN TO THE RESCUE COME TIM HOLT AND CHITO. AND EVERY STEP OF THEIR HORSES' HOOF'S BRINGS THEM CLOSER TO THE GRIM RIDDLE OF...

THE DOOMED WAGON TRAIN!



THE WHISTLING OF WAR ARROWS AND THE SHARP CRACK OF SPENCER CARBINES DROWN OUT TIM'S RAPID APPROACH—

THEY HAVEN'T NOTICED US YET, CHITO — BUT THEY WILL NOW!

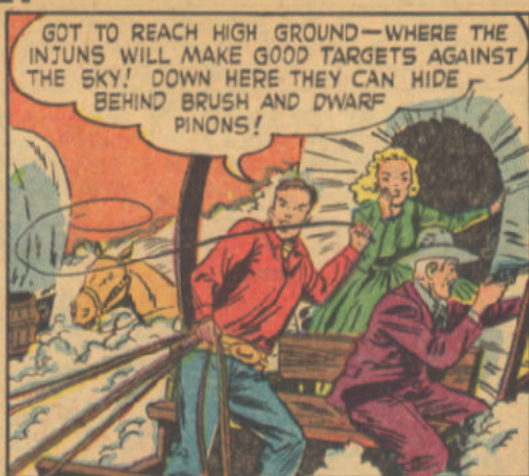


GOT HERE JUST IN TIME!

AAAAGHH!

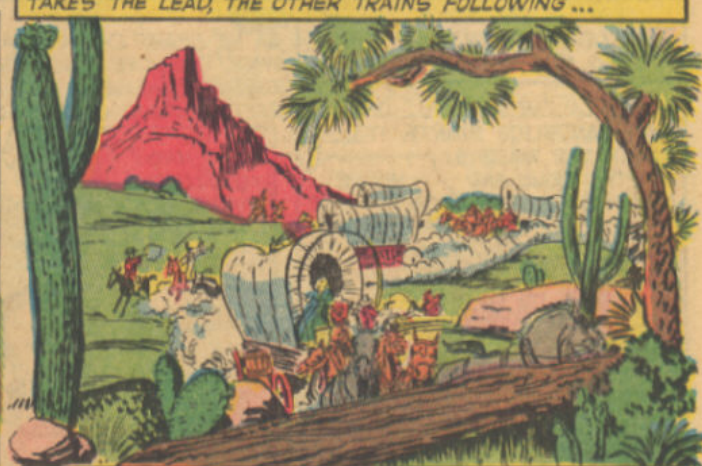


TIM HOLT



SOLTS BLASTING, TIM RIDES ROUGHSHOO OVER THE ATTACKING INDIANS!

WITH GUN AND VOICE, AND DEFT RIBBON-HANDLING, TIM TAKES THE LEAD, THE OTHER TRAINS FOLLOWING...



FINALLY, HIGH UP IN THE TIMBER BELT, THE WAGON TRAIN DRAWS TO A HALT...



FAR AHEAD OF THE WAGON TRAIN, HIGH IN THE PEPPERMINT RANGE, THREE MEN HUNKER DOWN BEFORE A CAMPFIRE...

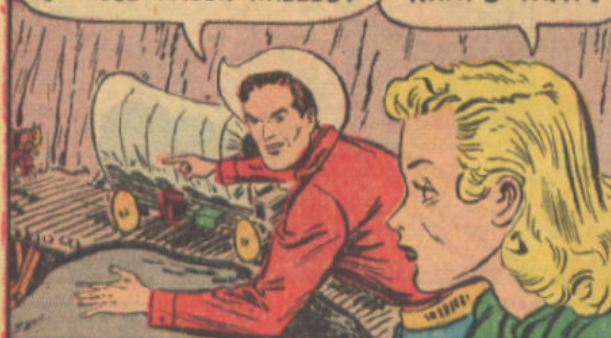


TIM HOLT.

DAY AFTER DAY, THE BIG VANS MOVE WESTWARD. CLIMBING HIGHER INTO THE PEPPERMINT MOUNTAINS, THEY COME TO A "CORDUROY" ROAD...

A FANCY NAME FOR SUCH A CRUDE ROAD, MISS PAULA— BUT THEY GIVE GOOD TRACTION TO THOSE WAGON WHEELS!

MMM— BUT THEY'RE AWFULLY BUMPY OH— WHAT'S THAT?



DYNAMITE!

JUMP FOR IT!



TIM LEAPS DOWN ONTO THE LEAD WAGON.

SPEED UP THE WAGONS! ONCE THAT LANDSLIDE STARTS, IT'LL KNOCK THE WAGONS OFF THE TRAIL AND CRUSH EVERY ONE OF US!

WE'RE CAUGHT LIKE RATS IN THE TRAP!



THE SHARP CRACK OF A BULL WHIP! THE CREAKING STRAIN OF TORTURED WHEELS! A LURCH! A RATTLED BUMPING OF WHEELS ON LOGS!

GEE-HAW! GEE-HAW! FASTER! FASTER!



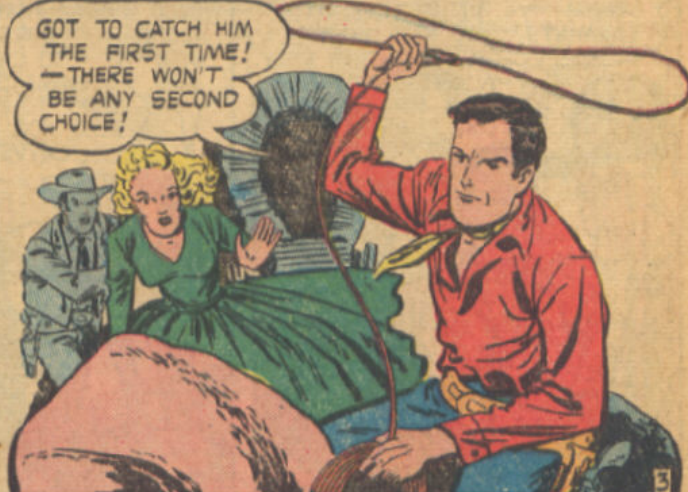
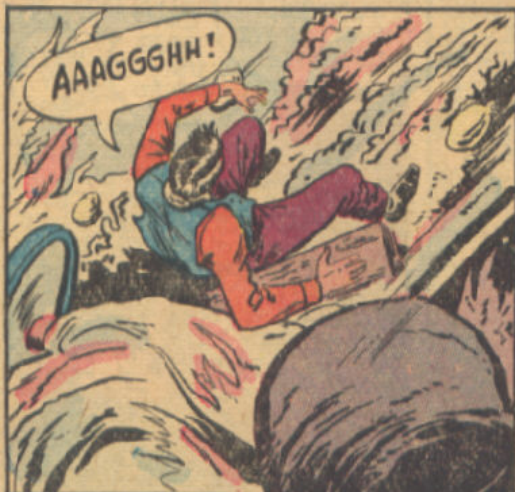
ROCKS THUD DOWN! DIRT SLIDES FROM LITTLE HUMPS OF BARRIERS, BUT ONWARD THE WAGONS ROLL—

IF WE CAN REACH THAT SOLID ROCK UP AHEAD, WE'RE SAFE!



AAAGGGHH!

GOT TO CATCH HIM THE FIRST TIME! —THERE WON'T BE ANY SECOND CHOICE!



TIM HOLT



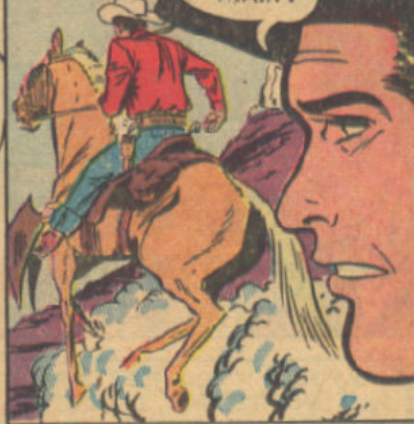
THE LAST WAGON JERKS TO A HALT AS THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN GIVES WAY AND SWEEPS THE LOG ROAD INTO THE CANYON!

WE'D BE—DOWN THERE—WIVES AND SONS AND DAUGHTERS CAUGHT IN THAT CRUSHER—IF YOU HADN'T HELPED US, TIM!



LET'S GO, CHITO! IF WE'RE QUICK ENOUGH, WE MAY CATCH THE COYOTES YET!

THEY WEE! BE MUCHO'S BAD, TIM! AY DI MI! THEENK OF ALL THOSE POOR LEELE CHEILDREN EEN THAT WAGON TRAIN!



IT WAS A DELIBERATE MURDER ATTEMPT ALL RIGHT. THAT DYNAMITING COULD HAVE HAD NO OTHER PURPOSE THAN TO SMASH THOSE WAGONS!

THREE HORSES' TRACKS BACK EEN THE HEELS, TIM. THEY ARE TO BE MADE CAMP, THEN ARE RIDING ON!



WITH EYES TRAINED BY THE APACHE INDIANS TO READ "SIGN", TIM IS ABLE TO FOLLOW THE TRIPLE SETS OF HOOFMARKS DOWN A SERIES OF CANYONS...



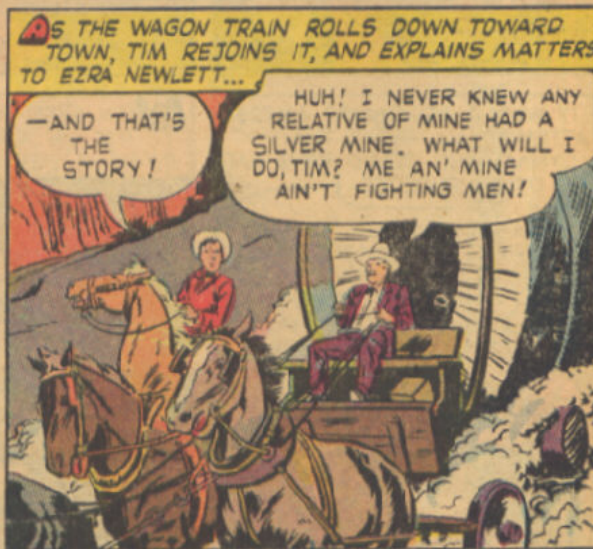
TWO DAYS LATER, TIM AND CHITO REIN IN AT A BOOMER TOWN. HERE IS THE STARTING POINT FOR THE RACE FOR NEW LAND. HERE TOO, ARE THE THREE WOULD-BE KILLERS...



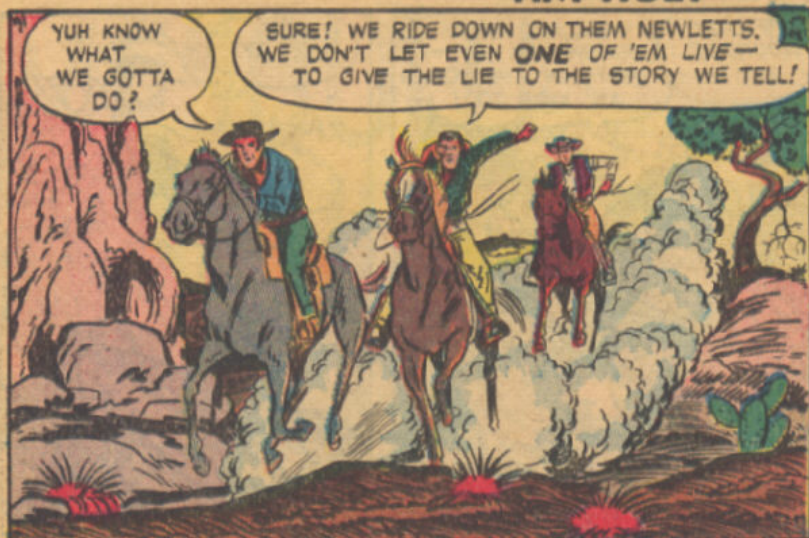
LATER THAT DAY, IN A HASTILY ERECTED SALOON THAT ACCOMMODATES THE NEWCOMERS TO THE BOOMER TOWN...



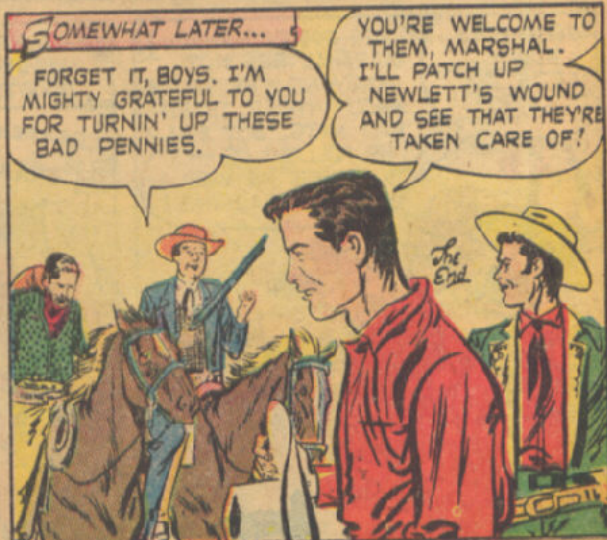
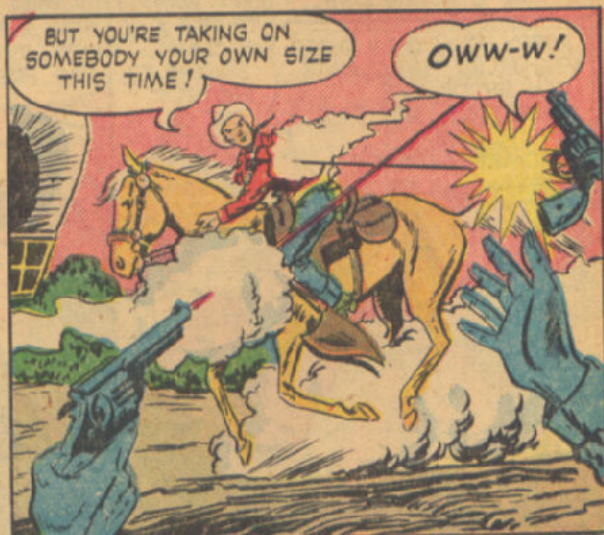
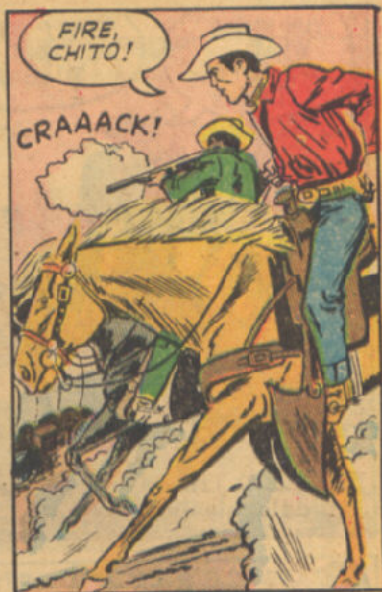
TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT

MESQUITE MANHUNT



CHOLLA JIM Benbrook sat tense in the saddle, his eyes searching out across the dun slopes of shrub-covered flats. He was a new rancher in the Basin, but he would not be new for long. He would not be a rancher, either—unless he found the men who were running off his selected stock of Oregon Durhams!

He felt the heavy Colt revolver rub his thigh as he came down out of the saddle to examine the trampled ground where a bawling calf had been held and branded. The still-warm embers of the branding iron fire sent a thin heat film upwards. And in the trampled dirt around the embers he found the heel-marks of a man's boots. Cholla Jim hunkered down and squinted, memorizing that mark. The next time he saw it, he would know it, as he knew his own face!

Thoughtfully, he swung up and toed the big bay gelding and moved him at a steady trot across the mesquite-dotted flats. He was a newcomer to this range; he had been foreman of the big Grated House ranch, back in Texas, had learned and practised the art of ranching there. Now, with his life's savings, his wife and little boy, he had come to Arizona—and run into rustlers!

They're getting bolder, he thought. They do their branding right on my land, now. It indicated that they did not hold him in much respect. His lips twisted grimly. He had killed men, back in Texas. His right hand was adept with a Colt, and with the trigger of a Winchester. He had refrained from fighting, thinking it might brand him a gunman. It doesn't matter what anyone thinks, from now on, his thoughts ran. I either kill or get killed!

The sudden spaaaaannng of a rifle bullet slamming off an upthrust tongue of sandstone overhead sent him leaping groundward. Another bullet ploughed dirt at the gelding's feet, scaring him into a twisting, bucking jump away from Benbrook. Desperately he clawed for his saddle rifle, and saw it going

away as the horse bolted, heels high.

Cholla Jim lurched toward the sandstone rocks, his hand going by instinct to his Colt. He knew that the man with the rifle could bide his time. His Colt could never harm the rifleman. It did not have the distance and the accuracy that the Winchester had. But he yanked his gun and hit the dirt on his belly, and crawled.

He lay panting, listening. Only the silence of the mesquite flats hemmed him in. Somewhere in the far distance, a buffalo wolf howled. He squirmed as the hot sun baked him. There was no time, out here. It was wait—wait!—and at any moment a .56-50 slug might come burrowing into his back!

He turned carefully, the sandstone rock between him and the hidden killer. Suddenly he caught his breath. Someone was running heavily, boots pounding in the sand.

Cholla Jim came to his feet in one abrupt motion like an uncoiling spring. His face was shadowed from the sun as he came from behind the sandstone rock. His Colt was in his hand, and with the big brim of his hat keeping out the sun, his vision was perfect. He saw the running man a hundred yards away stop and turn and throw up his rifle.

Cholla Jim thumbed his Colt as he ran forward, lurching from side to side to throw off the rifleman's aim. A rifle is a ponderous weapon for close quarters. The rifleman cursed once, stood undecided for a moment—then went down with a .45 shell in his left thigh. The rifle dropped and lay ten feet from his balled fist.

Benbrook stood over the man, smoke drifting upward from his Colt. His face was a hard, brown mask. "Spindler! A cowpoke for the Crazy X. You in this on your lonesome, hombre—or is the whole Crazy X behind you?"



TIM HOLT

Spindler, a spasm of pain twisting his mouth downward, glared upward. He snarled, "Throw your loop somewhere else, Benbrook. I'm not spooked by you or —"

Cholla Jim grinned. He put his big hand down behind Spindler's neck and caught hold of his shirt collar and twisted, heaving the man to his feet. As his weight came down on his bullet-ripped thigh, Spindler screamed.

Benbrook said coldly, "I got a wife and a youngster, Spindler. I'm in no mood to play games. My wife and my son need my little ranch. They need me, Spindler. You tried to kill me."

Spindler gibbered, trying to balance himself on one leg. Cholla Jim let go of him, and again his weight came down on his wounded leg. Spindler bit his lip half through with the pain that racked him. He lay shaking and sweating and moaning.

Benbrook hefted his gun. He smiled, but it was not a nice smile. Spindler saw that smile and shook his head. "No—don't!—I'll tell you what you—want to know. Sure—it's me an' two more boys on the Crazy X."

"Where they holed up?"

"North of here. A mile th' other side of Bubbling Sink. We run the steers we rustle down below the sink, in one of the box canyons."

"Get up. You're going to take me there!"

"No. They'll shoot me too! I—" Then Spindler saw the cold, hard look in Cholla Jim's eyes and shivered. . . .

* * *

They came together out of the shadows of the bluffs, quartering down toward the low, rolling slopes of Bubbling Sink. Benbrook rode with his rifle in his hands, dark eyes watchful under the Stetson brim.

He saw the two men whirl away from their campfire, their hands going down toward their guns. Cholla Jim rammed in his spurs. His horse leaped forward and his gun came up.

The men were scattering before the pounding hooves of the bay gelding. Benbrook felt the wind of a bullet fan his cheek. His eyes were hard, grim. *It's you or them!* he told himself. *You want to make a home for Molly and young Ted, and they're just human buzzards, preying on the weak...*

He was firing as he swayed to the motion of his bay horse. He fired without sighting, a snap shot that missed. Then he was whirling the pony in his tracks, turning him as if he were cutting out a steer from a trail herd. He saw a running man in front of him and threw down with his gun.

The Colt bucked in his hand, but the running man was falling away, lunging one way as his gun spurted another.

Benbrook whirled the bay gelding, his Colt roaring. He had sighted the last outlaw ducking for cover behind a rock spur, but he gave him no time. He sent the bay at a gallop up the hill, reloading as he ran.

He caught the man in an open space, ten feet from the rock. The man stood there with his gun up and he triggered it right at Benbrook. Only somehow, he was missing and the Colt in Cholla Jim's hand was steady as he raised it. He felt the walnut grip buck into his palm as his thumb released the hammer once—then twice.

The man's legs twisted as if they were rubber. He turned slowly, sideways, and fell that way.

Cholla Jim put his Colt into his holster and turned to look at Spindler. "Reckon this mesquite manhunt of mine is over," he said. "They're both dead, an' yuh'll be safe in jail by nightfall. Yep, from now on, my ranch will grow and prosper!"

And as he cantered after the bound Spindler on the trail to town, he thought of dinner waiting for him in the ranchhouse, and Molly, and young Ted. And a warm glow filled his chest and ribs, and spread into his heart. . . .

THE END

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (39 U. S. C. 233) OF TIM HOLT, published monthly at Buffalo, New York, for October 1st, 1949.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, MAGAZINE ENTERPRISES, INC., 11 Park Place, New York 7, N. Y.
Editor, RAYMOND C. KRANK, 11 Park Place, New York 7, N. Y.
Managing Editor, NONE.
Business Manager, SALLY R. HENDERSON, 11 Park Place, New York 7, N. Y.

2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total

amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.) Magazine Enterprises, Inc., 11 Park Place, New York 7, N. Y.
Vincent Sullivan, 11 Park Place, New York 7, N. Y.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are not any, so state.) None.

4. The two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of

the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

SALLY R. HENDERSON,
Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16th day of September, 1949.

THEODORE MARVIN.

Notary Public.

Bronx County Clerk's No. 19, Reg. No. 63-M.O.; New York County Clerk's No. 266, Reg. No. 359-M.O.

Commission expires March 30, 1950.

TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT

WHEN A STEAMBOAT GAMBLER ABANDONS THE MISSISSIPPI WATERWAYS AND SETTLES DOWN IN THE COWTOWN OF BULLET, TROUBLE STARTS BREWING LIKE THE START OF A KANSAS TORNADO! FOR "ACES" WILDE WAS NOT CLEVER ENOUGH TO PLAY WITHOUT CHEATING - AND WHEN HE FLEECED THE COWPUNCHERS OF TIM HOLT'S T-BAR-H RANCH - HE DISCOVERED THAT WHEN TIM CAME RIDING, THERE WAS BOUND TO BE -

SIXGUNS IN THE CARDS.



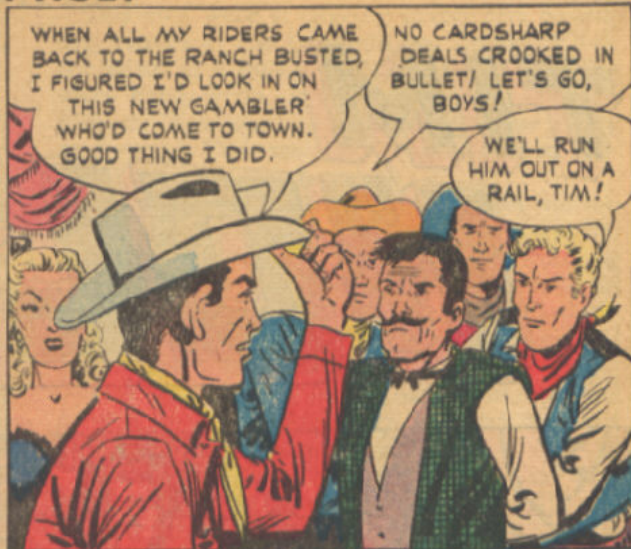
AS TIM FLINGS HIMSELF ACROSS THE POKER TABLE OF THE CATTLE QUEEN SALOON, "ACES" WILDE CRIES OUT IN FEAR -



TIM HOLT



LOOK, GENTS! A 'HOLDOUT' FASTENED TO THE ARM - WITH A LITTLE CLAW TO HOLD A FEW CARDS THAT'LL COME IN HANDY TO WIN A BIG POT!

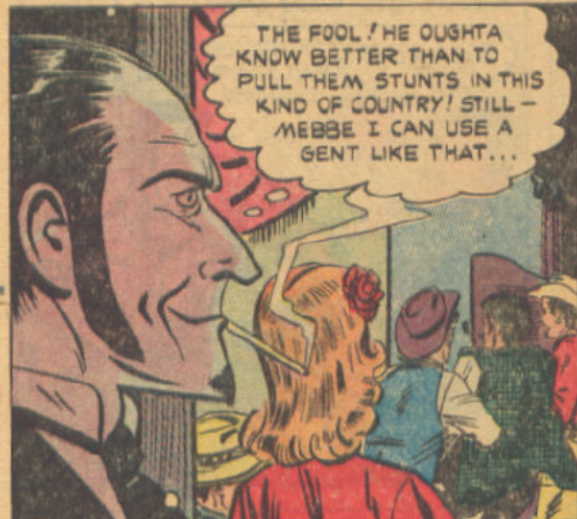


WHEN ALL MY RIDERS CAME BACK TO THE RANCH BUSTED, I FIGURED I'D LOOK IN ON THIS NEW GAMBLER WHO'D COME TO TOWN. GOOD THING I DID.

NO CARDSHARP DEALS CROOKED IN BULLET! LET'S GO, BOYS!

WE'LL RUN HIM OUT ON A RAIL, TIM!

AS THE HAPLESS GAMBLER IS HUSTLED TOWARD THE STREET, A GRIM SMILE PLAYS ON THE LIPS OF ZEB ZENO, SALOON OWNER...



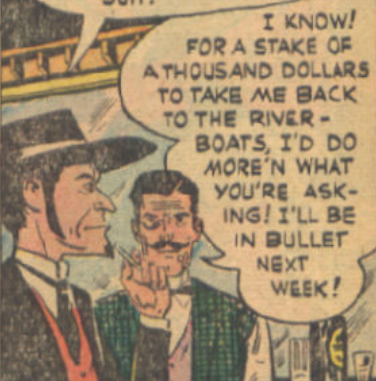
THE FOOL! HE OUGHTA KNOW BETTER THAN TO PULL THEM STUNTS IN THIS KIND OF COUNTRY! STILL - MEBBE I CAN USE A GENT LIKE THAT...

I'LL LET HIM GET AWAY FROM TOWN, THEN OVER-TAKE HIM! I GOT A LITTLE PLAN TO GET HOLD OF SOME OF HOLT'S CATTLE - AND WITH THAT TINHORN'S HELP, IT WILL WORK EASY!



SOME HOURS LATER, IN A LITTLE MINING TOWN SOUTH OF THE PRAIRIE TRAIL...

YUH KNOW WHAT TO DO, THEN? SHAVE OFF THAT MOUSTACHE, WEAR GLASSES, GET A DIFFERENT SUIT!



I KNOW! FOR A STAKE OF A THOUSAND DOLLARS TO TAKE ME BACK TO THE RIVER - BOATS, I'D DO MORE'N WHAT YOU'RE ASKING! I'LL BE IN BULLET NEXT WEEK!

THE FOLLOWING WEEK, A NEW GAMBLER ARRIVES IN BULLET. AND HE SOON ACQUIRES THE REPUTATION OF BEING AN HONEST DEALER. ON SATURDAY NIGHT, WHEN TIM'S HANDS RIDE INTO TOWN...

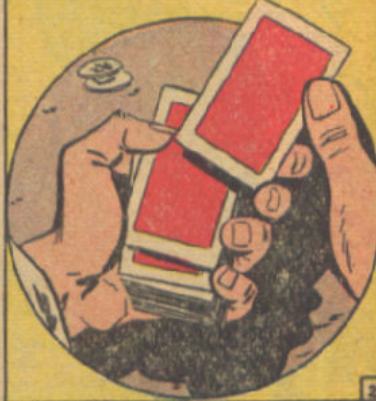


CARE FOR A LITTLE GAME, GENTS?

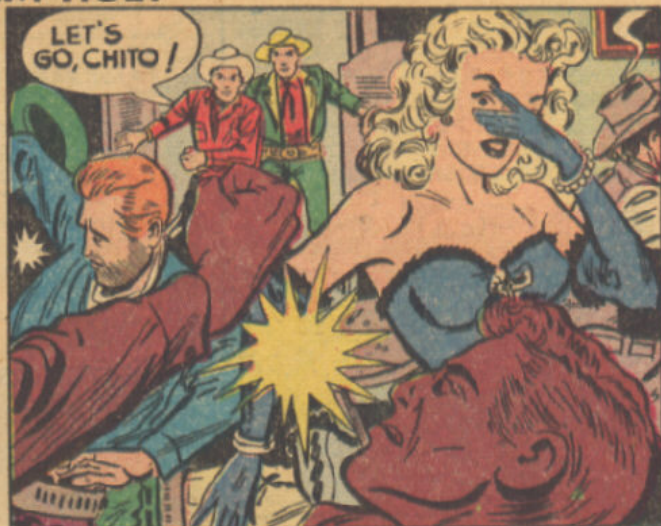
DON'T CARE IF WE DO!

SURE! START DEALIN'!

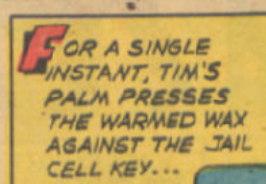
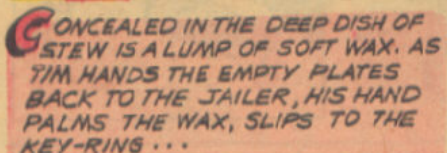
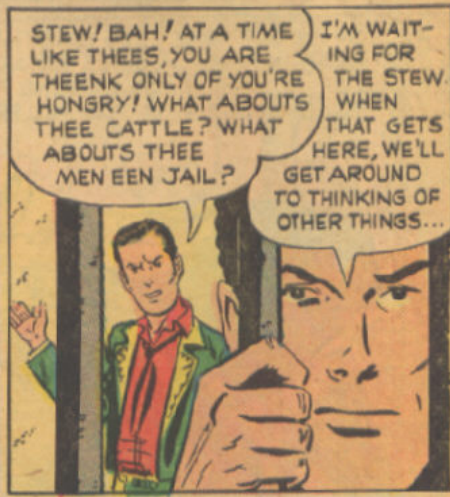
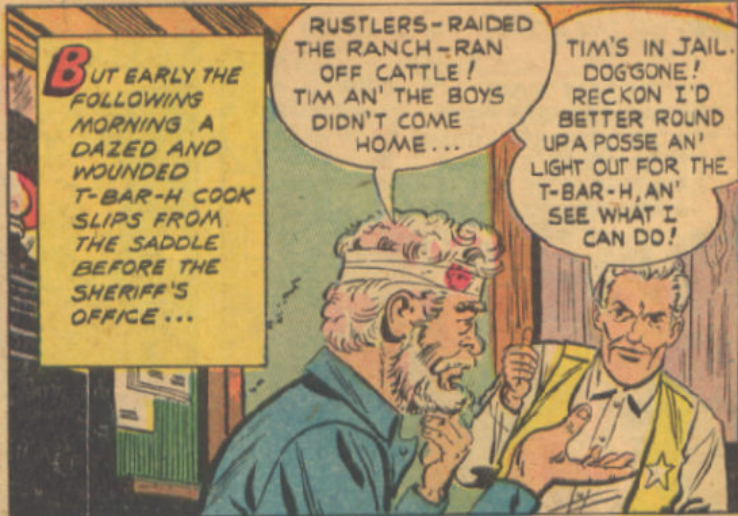
AS THE GAME GOES ON, THE LONG NAILS OF THE GAMBLER CLEVERLY MARK THE PLAYING CARDS...



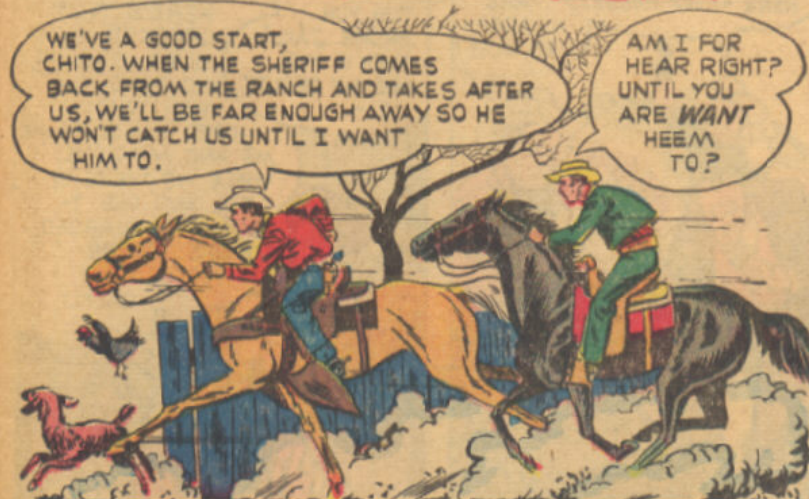
TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



SOME HOURS LATER, IN THE MINING TOWN SOUTH OF PRAIRIE PASS...



TIM HOLT



AS TIM YANKS THE GAMBLER TO HIS FEET, ONCE AGAIN THE BAT-WING DOORS SWING OPEN —





All work and gun-play would make Tim a dull boy, so it's time out for a chat with lovely Nan Leslie.

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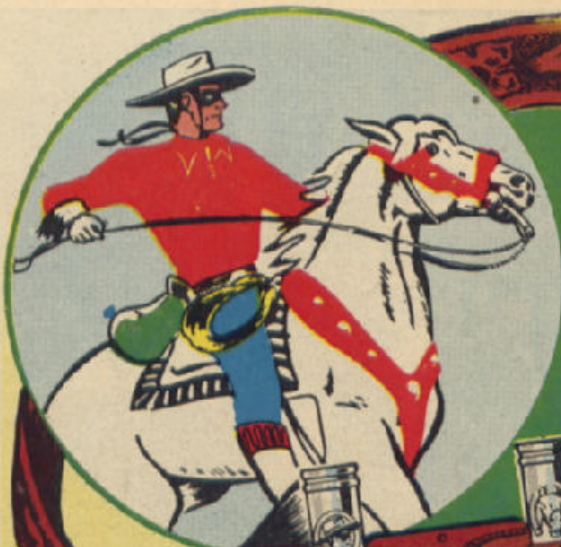
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With Cowboy's Belt

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